

ABSTRACT OF DISCLOSURE

An automated method is described for searching through sets of software patches to select a recommended set for installation on any given system. The patches are organized into patch chains each having a root. The method involves searching for a patch that corrects a particular defect or that has a particular property, examining additional patches sharing the same patch chain as the patch found and occupying a position on the shared patch chain between that patch and the root of the chain, and presenting as candidates for the recommended set patches that satisfy one or more specified conditions determined by the nature of each patch and by the identity of the patch recipient.